



SELF HELP FOR HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE
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27 May 2003

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20554

ORIGINAL

Re: Ex Parte Meeting, WT Docket No. 01-309

On May 20th, 2003 Michael Tecklenberg representing the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (AGBell) and Brenda Battat representing Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH) met with Federal Communications Commission representatives to discuss cochlear implants and compatibility with digital wireless telephones. Commission staff attending were: Greg Guice, Mindy Littell, Patrick Forster, and Joseph Levin from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, and Julius Knapp and David Means, from OET.

Items discussed were as follows:

- With changes in candidacy expanded to include younger children and people with more residual hearing, both AGBell and SHHH see more of their members getting cochlear implants. To date 25,000 people in the U.S. have implants and that number is increasing by 20% per year.
- With Federal and state infant hearing screening legislation more babies with hearing loss are identified at birth and implants are one option that parents may choose for their child
- There are three companies that manufacture implants: Cochlear Ltd., Australia, Advanced Bionics, U.S., and Med El, Austria. We encourage the Commission to meet with all three companies to discuss issues related to compatibility with digital wireless telephones
- It is our understanding that Cochlear Ltd now includes a telecoil in the behind-the-ear model of their Nucleus product, for use with telephones and assistive listening devices. It is quite likely that the other companies will follow suit. Therefore telecoil inductive coupling with digital wireless telephones is an issue for cochlear implants as it is for hearing aids
- There is anecdotal evidence that people with cochlear implants do get interference when using mobile telephones even though implants are shielded from RF interference.
- Reductions in RF interference levels from mobile telephones are needed for cochlear implants as for hearing aids.
Because the trend is for cochlear implants to be equipped with telecoils for use with telephone handsets, a requirement for telecoil pick-up in all wireless handsets is needed for both cochlear implant and hearing aid users.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this important issue. For follow-up on this issue, I can be reached at 301-657-2248.

Sincerely,

Brenda Battat

Director of Public Policy and State Development

18th International SHHH Convention
Register online at www.shhh.org

Atlanta • Georgia • Thursday, June 26 - Sunday, June 29, 2003

